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The Great Commission:

AN

INAUGURAL SERMON

PREACHED AT

JAMAICA PLAIN (WEST ROXBURY),

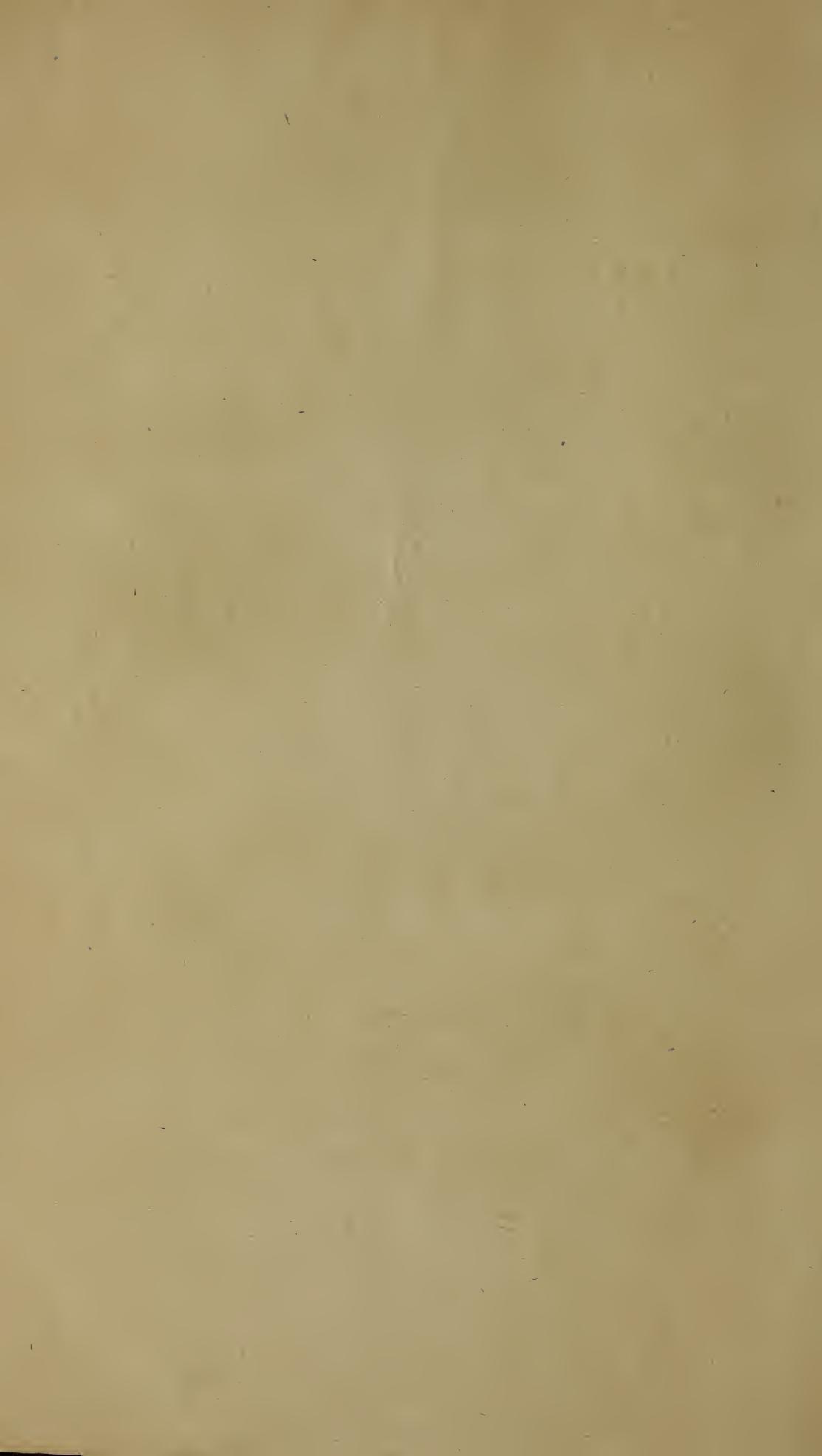
APRIL 24, 1859.

BY JAMES W. THOMPSON.

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S E R M O N.

Matt. x. 7, 8: "AND, AS YE GO, PREACH, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. HEAL THE SICK, CLEANSE THE LEOPERS, RAISE THE DEAD, CAST OUT DEVILS: FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE."

WHEN these words had passed from the lips of the Son of man, the New Dispensation, of which he was the Mediator, was fairly inaugurated. Till then, it had existed only in prophecy, in vision, in the thoughts of devout men who waited for the consolation of Israel, and in those rudimentary preparations by which the Twelve had been educated for receiving their august commission, and for doing the superhuman work it imposed. Now it becomes a fact, palpable, to be known and read of all men; central and centralizing to the thought, imagination and genius, the philosophy and literature, the faith and aspiration, of the whole human world; potent with self-evolving powers, which no demands can ever exhaust, and no opposition effectually resist; destined also to universal recognition, and a sway without limit in space or time. No longer is it a sublime conception alone in the mind of Christ, an abstract, formless, inoperative

force in his bosom; no longer a stupendous plan struggling to actualize itself, but waiting opportunity. Its hour is come, the fulness of the time; and now it shall stand forth a majestic reality, a church, a kingdom, and the amazing achievement it contemplates be at once commenced.

Regarded in the issues it involved, this was the grandest moment in human history; which, indeed, was not a moment, but an age, and series of ages, spreading out indefinitely, covering all time, extending into eternity, and peopling the heavens with earth-cradled saints. Could the Twelve have foreseen the consequences with which it was fraught; had they even apprehended, with any approach to its full extent, the personal responsibilities it would cast upon them, and the career of peril and hardship it was opening before them,—they would have shrunk from the undertaking, appalled by its fearful magnitude and endless relations.

So it is always. Every man holds in his bosom possibilities yet to be made actual, which, if they could be laid before him in one view, would utterly overwhelm and confound him. The futurity of our own being is, therefore, wisely concealed from us. No prophecy discloses it. Dark shadows are hung over it, hiding even from imagination the developments of which the germs lie hid within, and which are to become personal history. Could any one, — the

youth, for instance, just emerging into manhood ; the teacher, with his young charge around him ; the man of business, his head teeming with enterprises ; the rich man, with golden opportunities of usefulness ; the maiden at her bridal hour, in the flush of beauty, and amidst the tears and rejoicings which lend a chastened brilliancy to the dear but solemn rite ; the minister of religion, entering the sphere of his appointed service, and assuming his holy trusts and cares with immortal beings so wonderfully organized, so variously endowed, in capacities so unequal, in sensibilities, affections, cravings, aims, so unlike, for the field he is to tend and till, — could these take in at a glance all the issues involved in their several positions, the view would paralyze them ; they would shrink from the responsibilities ; they would be incapacitated for pursuing the good bound up for them in the vast and various combination of results. It is no denial of a privilege, then, but a gracious ordination of Heaven, that we must walk by faith, not by sight ; that the soul's path is illuminated, not by the dazzling effulgence of an all-comprehending knowledge, but by the mild stars of promise and hope. Count it not misfortune, but rather advantage, that to-morrow is hid ; and what it may bring forth, shrouded in mist. In calm trust, wait the revelation.

All history is a series of surprises, the rudiments of which, as also their order of evolution, were laid

in the bosom of the first man when God breathed into him a living soul. Higher, grander, more wonderful they become as the ages roll on, displaying more and more His wisdom who planned them. Observe their sublime unfoldings with grateful reverence, but seek not to know them before the time. Secret things belong to God only, and are to be disclosed, not when man's curiosity asks, but when His pleasure determines. The ignorance of the Twelve, when they stood before their Lord to receive their high commission, was their content and safety ; not to know or to be able to forecast the future, their wisdom and strength.

I have said, and repeat, that the date of the apostles' commission was the sublimest moment in human history. Whether viewed in the contrasts it exhibits, — so much power blended with so much weakness, — the Son of God intrusting to twelve rude, unlettered men of a benighted province, speaking the poor dialect of a language scarcely known abroad, a work so stupendous ; or whether contemplated in the results to be wrought out, — the overthrow of hoary idolatries and proud philosophies, which boasted as their founders the highest names known amongst men ; the enthroning of a new Man, of obscure origin, a Galilean, as sovereign in the realm of spiritual truth, before whose imperial sway Grecian culture should bow its garlanded head, and Roman bravery lay down

its invincible arms; the erection of a world-wide empire, that should at length swallow up every other, and itself, permeated in every part by the spirit of truth and love, be transfigured into a church universal, without spot or blemish,—whether beheld in either of these points of view, nothing sublimer can be imagined as transpiring on earth than the act of Jesus in sending forth his apostles.

But the commission they received did not die with them. It is of abiding force, renewed from generation to generation; keeping alive a perpetual apostleship to repeat the same glad tidings, and to perform the same ministries of mercy. To-day we hear the voice which the Twelve heard, saying, “Go, and proclaim, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

Listening reverently to the voice, and earnestly desiring to obey it, let us now search into the meaning of the message to be announced, and into the nature of the work to be done.

I. The message.

II. The work.

I. “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” It would be a strange thing to-day for such a band of men, starting together, to travel through the length and breadth of the land, making only this proclamation.

Doubtless there was a certain strangeness, even then, in their appearance and words. But whatever of singularity there might have been was in a measure relieved by a general preparation of the mind of the age. When they went forth in Galilee, Judea, Samaria, and announced that the long-deferred hope of Israel was at length accomplished, that the great redemption foretold from the beginning had begun to fulfil itself, the people's heart everywhere was ready to respond, "Amen! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Expectation, kept alive and transmitted from generation to generation, in each, as it succeeded, becoming more intense, was then brightening to its culmination; and this prepared the people for the messenger who should proclaim that the time of desire was accomplished, the day of fulfilment at hand. But not what they expected appeared; and so deep and bitter disappointment, or scornful disbelief and derision, was the first effect, when it began to be seen that the new kingdom was no earthly monarchy; its throne, no visible seat of majesty and power; that its laws were broader than any civil polity, higher than science had traversed, or art symbolized, or the loftiest forms of poetic speech more than faintly illustrated. Their visions of deliverance, of State grandeur, of overflowing treasures and irresistible arms,—the ideal glory of all human kingdoms,—were to be realized indeed, but in a way they never dreamed of.

Only as symbols were they true. Material splendor and magnificence could only represent, and that but dimly, the true kingdom of heaven, which cometh not with observation; which embraces the world of thought, desire, emotion, affection, aspiration; which has the conscience for its throne, the heart for its palace, the eternal God for its sovereign, and, for its conquests and trophies, the vices that destroy the body, and the passions that war against the soul. It is a kingdom founded in everlasting truths, and sustained by principles of order, beauty, and rectitude, which have their root in the Infinite Mind. But its truths and principles are not subtle and incomprehensible abstractions: they are all combined, expressed, and represented in the life and character of a single PERSON, and that Person no other than the Son of God. Thus the new kingdom is, in substance, a new theocracy,—God reigning over men, and in the midst of them; the regency being vested in his beloved Son. It is, in other words, Christianity taken up into a living man born of the Highest, in his bosom enthroned, in his life illustrated, by his death and resurrection completed, sealed, established, as supreme law and an ever-abiding spiritual force over man and in man, to govern him, to renew him, to inspire him, day by day, till he becomes perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. It is the Word, not in the silence in which it was “in the beginning” with

God, but spoken and speaking; “the Word made flesh, and dwelling amongst us,” radiant with holy beauty, its heart beating and its countenance flushed with divine love and mercy; the Word going forth from lips touched with living coals from heaven, to kindle, in its progress, soul after soul into a quenchless zeal for truth and righteousness, till the holy fire-baptism has cleansed and saved the world. Wherever the truths and principles of Christianity are acknowledged; wherever the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is believed in so as to be felt, loved, worshipped; in whatever soul the Eternal One is consciously enshrined, according to that high axiom of St. John, “He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,” — there the kingdom of heaven has come; there the benign and eternal reign of wisdom and love has commenced; there religion is fulfilling its office; there peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are the soul’s abiding possession.

It cannot be too strongly felt — what the Twelve were instructed to proclaim — that the kingdom of heaven is come, is here. We have not to look abroad for it, to cross perilous seas, to visit strange lands, to inquire of the masters of learning, or to follow the guidance of new stars, in order to find its capital and court; but to seek it here, amongst ourselves and within ourselves.

There are those who are ever looking backward

for their kingdom of heaven. Their golden age is far behind, — in buried glories, in perished institutions, in virtues that once flourished, in an innocence and peace no more to be repeated. Their light is the lamp of memory. Cities, empires, arts, literatures, that have passed away, are their study and delight. They live in the past. There are others, again, whose kingdom of heaven is in the distant future. Their imagination is for ever busy in portraying the scenes and circumstances of an age yet to dawn, or a world yet to come, which they paint in hues of a brilliancy to which nothing in the present, however enchanting, is worthy to be compared. This is a great mistake ; it is to forget the message, “The kingdom of heaven is *at hand.*” God did not exhaust his goodness in the earlier ages, nor has he reserved all its outpourings for a future day. No : he has surrounded the present with heavenly attractions ; crowned to-day with imperial glories ; festooned the passing moments with flowers fresh-plucked from paradise ; brightened the immediate scene with rays effulgent as those which fell upon the world when the morning stars sang their first hymn, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The kingdom of heaven is come in the plenitude of its grace and truth. The two great commandments are its fundamental law. The incomparable Sermon on the Mount, the profound spiritual inductions of St. John, the unsurpassed argumenta-

tions and melting heart-utterances of the great apostle to the Gentiles, reveal its spirit and purpose. It is come, and still coming. More and more, its mighty energies are diffusing themselves. Deeper and deeper, its great life is searching the secret windings of the human heart. Farther and wider spread the rays of its unclouded Sun over the waste places of error and the dismal vales of sin. Yes, the new kingdom is come. Its benignant sway is felt as an instant reality. To every community of believers the saying is true, “The kingdom of heaven is within you,” — within *you*. According to the measure of their faith, the King is seen by them in his beauty and royal apparel; his voice heard in its awful authority; his life perceived as impersonated truth, virtue, sanctity, hope, eternal and complete. And by them, in the uprightness of their daily walk; in the pureness of their hearts, or the sighings of their penitence; in the overflowings of their mutual charity, and the holy fellowship of their worship; in the steadfastness of their zeal for the enlargement of the borders of Zion, and the displacement of whatever exalts itself against the will of God, — each day and hour, in high places and in obscurest corners; in the private ear of trembling penitence and solitary struggle, and on the house-tops of stolid security and luxurious repose; to the young, undisciplined to saintly patience and prayer; to the middle-aged, imprisoned in the

outward and sensuous, but striving to be set free; to the old, imploring God to be their stay and staff, that they may depart in peace,—the announcement is to be made, by look and speech and rapturous song, and that silent eloquence of the Spirit's grace which is more convincing than voice and words, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Such, then, is the message.

II. And, now, what is the work? “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” No miraculous power rests on us as on the apostles, and we can use only such gifts as we receive. Yet the Lord is with his faithful servants still, to aid them in every ministration of their hearts and hands to the relief of human suffering and woe, and the cure of those maladies of which sin is both cause and consequence. Their work at this day, though not in all respects identical with that of the primitive heralds of the gospel, is not essentially different. It is a service of man in the name of Christ, and its characteristic feature is its *humanity*. It illustrates that saying of an apostle, that pure religion is manifested in visiting the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and in an unspotted life. It is not, like the priesthood of every other religion, mainly an altar-service or a ritual performance, a special work of the temple and the

holy day ; but it is a daily and continual offering at the sweet shrine of kindness and mercy,— a life from which blessed influences spring with no sabbath-pauses, rising as fragrant incense over man's misery, and penetrating, as a celestial aroma, the polluted air of the world. It takes its Lord for its model. As he went about healing the sicknesses, soothing the sorrows, pitying the injuries, lifting the burthens, of men ; so his servants follow him, humbly seeking to make their presence a blessing and a joy to those unto whom they are sent : and, as there was no form of misery which did not command his sympathy, so there is none which they can willingly overlook. As against every inveterate wrong under which men groaned, however intrenched and defended by custom, policy, or power, he lifted up his voice in stern and terrible rebuke ; so they turn the weapons of their warfare upon all the crimes and oppressions that fill the earth, or any portion of it, with wailing and tears, and that hinder the triumphant march of truth and righteousness to their destined glory. Evil, the *root* of evil, — *that* is to be destroyed. The wretchedness of man or woman — *that* is to be commiserated. The tears that stream from the eyes of penitence, or that soil the cheeks of bereavement, — *they* are to be wiped with hands of tender condolence. The demons which sin conjures up into the maddened brain — *they* are to be rebuked and cast out by the

spirit of holiness and love. The dead in trespasses and sins — *they* are to be roused by the trumpet-call of the gospel, and, if possible, warmed into life in the bosom of Christian sympathies and affections. Religion, as they administer it, is the friend and helper of man. It multiplies the loaves of the poor. It offers willing shoulders to the burthens of the weary and careworn. It puts sight into the touch of the blind, and speech into the fingers of the mute. To the houseless, it gives a home; to the cripple, a hospital; to the wayward and intractable youth, a School of Reform; and to the frail penitent, a Refuge from temptation and the scorn of the unfeeling. It watches with the sick, by star and by sun, as an angel of peace; and it points the faith of the dying to the eternal mercy-seat, and the heaven which surrounds it. Nor is this all. Authority to heal and restore, to bind up and console, carries with it the duty of protecting against evil. So it seeks to purify and elevate the fountains of social influence; to clarify the springs of moral life; to make the home, the school, the state, nurseries of virtue and spiritual strength; and especially to fence round the young, just beginning the immortal race, with safeguards — in their tastes, affections, fears, and hopes — against the approaches of temptation, and the fearful ruin it so often succeeds in effecting.

Ah, how sadly has the moral and humane part of

Christianity been neglected hitherto ! Had the gospel been exhibited by its servants, during the eighteen centuries of its life, in the spirit of its author ; had it been made to appear more the present friend and benefactor of man, and less the dogmatic combatant or bigoted devotee ; had the world seen it more in the acts of a genial messenger of deep and genuine philanthropy, penetrating the darkest scenes of human trial with a word to cheer and a hand to bless, and less in splendid and pompous ceremonies, obscure and unbelievable creeds, and solemn pietisms ; had it borne on all its banners waving over its commerce and trade, proudly floating from its domes of legislation and justice, unfurled in new and strange fields by its own soldiers, that one word which syllables the dearest name of God, and of which itself is the highest expression,— the poor, the outcast, the enslaved, the suffering, everywhere and from every cause, would not only have been vastly reduced in numbers, but those who still remained would have been in warm and living sympathy with it, and so in a condition to receive the fulness of its life and light. Oh ! when shall the lesson taught by the ministry of Jesus be understood,— that to protect the innocent, to guide the young, to reclaim the wanderer, to lift up the fallen, to cheer the desponding, to encourage the penitent, to bind up the broken-hearted, to strive manfully against evil, and to labor diligently for good,— that

this work of *humanity* is the allotted task of each disciple according to his ability, and the only evidence that will be admitted, in the Great Day, of his fitness to be a companion of that twice-born brotherhood of whom Christ is head?

Such, then, is the message, and such the work, of the Christian ministry. With this message and work it has fallen to me, in the providence of God, to be charged. I come to you to-day, my friends, bearing the message, “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you,” and charged in my conscience and soul, by Him whose servant I am, to give unto you freely that which I also have received, for your redemption from sin, and edification in righteousness; for your security amid the perils of prosperity, and your solace under the pains of adversity; for the solution of your doubts, and the confirmation of your faith; for the guidance of your souls to the rest of consummated virtue and saintly holiness in the bosom of the Father of mercies. Standing here, for the first time, in this special relation to you, it may well be supposed that some curiosity is felt in respect to the views which may govern the administration of my office. But this curiosity, if it exists, can be gratified only by statements the most general. Young ministers are accustomed, on occasions like this, to exhibit a programme of what may be expected of them, and what they expect of their people; but it is a programme which is

seldom followed on either side. In the fervors of a hitherto unbaffled zeal, they often pledge themselves to herculean labors, forgetting that it is only sons of Hercules who are equal to them. I offer to you nothing of the kind. I cannot tell what I shall preach, and what I shall do ; save that, as grace is given to me, I will declare, and labor to extend, the kingdom of heaven, present amongst men in the historical Christ and his word, and in all hearts in which the gospel has entered as a subjective reality ; and will seek to give full effect here to all those truths, sympathies, and charities which lighten the weight of pain, disappointment, sorrow, and sin, and which tend to lift young and old, the strong and the weak, the fresh and the weary, into the serene gladness of true religion. I would seek to make doctrine practical ; the highest truth, a life within : for, if left in the form of ideas in the mind, truth is only like the rain-drop upon the leaf. It may glisten in the sun, and add a moment's brilliancy to the object ; but it is of no service to the tree. But, when ideas are translated into principles and deeds, they are like the raindrops, penetrating to the roots, and sending new energy and vital sap into every branch. I am here as a minister of the New Testament, — the dispensation of grace and truth by Jesus Christ. I am here, not as one called by you simply, but sent by my Master, — both mine and yours. Am I asked to indicate the basis

of my teaching? My answer is in the words of Paul to the church of Corinth: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." No new-fangled gospel of to-day or yesterday or to-morrow; but that which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, — unchanging truth, immortal goodness, everlasting life, the supreme authority and dominion of Him who is over all, and through all, and in us all. Taking my place within the new kingdom, with my people around me, I move forward with it in its aggressions upon the domains of the world, opposing whatever would obstruct its march, and giving my whole heart to whatever commends itself to my judgment as calculated to further its beneficent ends. Details are unnecessary; but this must be said, this you would all wish me to say, that, *as I hear, so shall I speak*; trying to keep my ear open to every whisper of the Spirit's voice, and my tongue clear to make report thereof to you. Not taking counsel of man, except for the sake of his help to the understanding of the word of Christ and the law of God; not weakly yielding to the suggestions of fear or of a short-sighted expediency, nor defiantly challenging censure and opposition; not hesitating to espouse an unpopular cause when it bears the marks of right and truth, nor disdaining that which is popular from a paltry pride of singularity, or contempt of public opinion,— freely and fearlessly, in the love of man and

the love of God, I pray that grace may be given me to declare the whole truth as it is in Jesus, and that you may have the same grace to profit withal.

There has been much controversy about the freedom of the pulpit. I have but little to say on that point. The pulpit *is* free; and no honest man wishes it to be otherwise. By its very nature, it is free. The moment it is restrained of its liberty, it ceases to be a pulpit, and becomes a piece of fancy-work in wood, with a speaking automaton behind it. The imputation of a desire to interfere with its freedom would be felt, by every honorable mind, as an insult. But it is useless, and, worse, it is harmful folly, for it to be for ever vaunting its freedom and provoking assaults. Let its action, rather than its boastful lips, declare its independence; and let it use its freedom with discretion, lest it become a snare and a hinderance to the truth. It is a sad mistake of the pulpit, when it assumes that its hearers are at odds with it on vital points, and are to be worried and goaded into agreement. Its function is not to drive, but to win, souls into the fold of the Great Shepherd, —

“By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear.”

All here, in these calm moments of meditation, and in this vestibule of the heavenly temple, are not merely willing, but in their souls *demand*, that the

truth should be preached freely, fully, earnestly, and without reservation. Every ingenuous mind would be ashamed of the minister of religion who should keep back any part of his message from imbecile compliance with prejudices, opinions, or caprices, reported to exist around him. Every true man would cry, “Let him be anathema!” He is false to his trust; and, being so, is false to his people.

But every part of his message, let him remember, is to be delivered as from the Lord, and not from himself, in the very spirit of his heavenly Teacher, calmly and without passion; avoiding all harsh and irritating tones and terms; in the deepest reverence for truth, and with that strong conviction of duty which would prompt him to say, “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!” Never let him throw down the gauntlet to any of his parishioners, and brace himself in the attitude of a pugilist. Let him assume that they are all his friends; as they are ostensibly, by the fact of their assembling for worship in the name of Christ, *his* friends, and subjects of his divine kingdom. Contests between pastor and flock are fatal to all religious life and growth. If the latter succumb, they feel that a galling priestly autocracy is established over them; if the former, he feels that the word of God is thenceforth bound in his person, and can no more utter itself except in broken sentences and pusillanimous tones. Let all such strifes be avoided, as

leading, by a swift and sure decadence, to destruction.

The church — by which I mean the congregation assembling for worship — is an organic whole, made up of members differing in original endowments, in culture, in moral traits, in pursuits, in the measure of their interest in the great questions which society and religion agitate, and in many other things ; yet all associated for common objects, and all equally entitled to every privilege belonging to the organization. The incumbent of the pulpit is, under Christ, the head of this body ; standing, by consent of all, to each and every member of it, without distinction, in one and the same relation ; knowing no rich, no poor, no party, no clique ; a common centre of religious influence, a common instructor, guide, and friend. The church is one body ; the ministry, not a separate estate, but a constituent membership. This idea excludes all hostile antagonisms, and is the true basis of a living harmony and a hopeful progress. The primitive apostolic church, guided by the inspired master-builders who laid its foundations, rested its strength in its unity. Uniformity of belief, thought, character, it did not demand, but unity of spirit and aim, — unity in the broad purposes for which it was gathered, and unity in the sense of brotherly fellowship. It was a household sacred to love and mutual edification, in which the forbearance, patience, charity,

generosity, of the gospel were to be freely exercised ; in which each was to feel himself in a manner protected by all ; in which the weak were to find succor in the strong ; the easy victims of temptation, pity from the upright and secure ; those who saw the truth but dimly kept where its beams fell, by those who were more fully enlightened. If one were overtaken in a fault, he was to be — not exscinded, not held up to scorn, not branded with the scarlet letter, but restored in the spirit of Christian meekness and compassion. When it is assumed that each member of a church is a separate power in it,— the minister with the rest,— and those subtle, undefinable, but most potent relations, which, in its normal state, constitute its organic unity, are lost sight of; when one member, cleric or laic, feels that the church is his to bind and loose, to make and unmake, to *control*, instead of regarding himself as belonging to it, as part and parcel of its vitality and working force, as bound up with it for a common end, and obliged to view its welfare as his own personally, — confusion and every evil work ensue.

This must suffice. I have spoken to you of the greatness of the commission of the ministers of the word, of the meaning of their message, of the nature of their work, and have indicated a general view of the manner in which it may be expected that

the ministry will be exercised here. To say that I look for your friendly co-operation would be needless. The affectionate smiles of the young, the efficient good-will and support of the middle-aged, the genial companionship of them whose day of active labor begins to put on sunset hues,—for these I look with entire confidence. To feel that they would be withheld, would be the signal for me to retire at the close of this service. Equally unnecessary would it be to attempt to point out *your* duties in detail: you know them already. You will not expect from this connection large immediate results. I come a sower, bearing seeds of the kingdom of heaven,—they are called seeds of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,—to sow as one blind; not knowing whether in stony places or on good ground, but committing the whole field to the nurture of Heaven's sun and rain. This seed is of slow growth: spiritual harvests are not ripened in a day or a year. Let us pray, that, in the *end of the world*,—your world and mine,—the angel reapers may find some sheaves here fit to be gathered into the Father's garner. Let us take encouragement from the old promise, “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” The day itself is auspicious,—the day which saw Him rise, in whom the world is risen into a new hope, and rising still into a new life,—the day which gave to

man victory over the grave, and made him fellow-heir with angels to the infinite treasures of God. Let us borrow from it all hopeful and cheering auguries, and go forward to the duties of our sacred relation, and continue in them, as under the light and joyful inspiration of Easter morning. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,—that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,—unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

